

Memorandum

To: Roundtable participants

cc: Mayor Betsy Hodges; Minneapolis City Council

From: Spencer Cronk, Minneapolis City Coordinator

Date: September 15, 2016

Subject: Results Minneapolis follow-up: Jobs and Skills

Thank you for participating in our recent City Goal Results Minneapolis roundtable conversation on Jobs and Skills. These roundtables present a unique opportunity for City staff, leadership, elected officials, and stakeholders from outside agencies and organizations to engage in robust discussions around our adopted Minneapolis community indicators.

The Jobs and Skills roundtable, the second of our two-part series on Economic Security, focused on employment and educational attainment in Minneapolis. Major themes of the conversation included the diverse pathways Minneapolis residents, students and employees follow into the labor market, the realities of racial bias and discrimination in hiring, retention, promotion and pay, and the many roles the City does and could play in eliminating workplace bias and discrimination. The following memo details these major themes and potential action steps that emerged during the conversation.

Theme: Employment bias and discrimination exists in Minneapolis. This “elephant in the room” must be remedied in order to make Minneapolis a more just and equitable city.

- **Racial bias and discrimination occurs in hiring, retention, promotion, and pay across the public, non-profit, and private sectors.** This pattern reflects the ways that white privilege and institutional racism are infused into our society and culture. To eliminate the status quo of racial disparities in employment, these realities need to be addressed head-on.
- **Many African-Americans and other people of color are educated, qualified, and want to work but are still unemployed.** While these individuals are ready for the labor market, employers are not hiring them. Even when they are employed, African-Americans and other people of color are often passed over for promotions in favor of white people from outside their place of employment.
- **The City is engaged in efforts to reduce bias within the enterprise.** Some examples of these efforts include implicit bias training for employees, equity-focused workshops organized by the City's Office of Equity and Inclusion, and the recent revision of the “rule of three” in hiring.

Theme: To help Minneapolis employers address employment bias and discrimination, we need a better understanding of their specific challenges and needs.

- **Preparing employers for an increasingly diverse workforce is necessary in order to achieve employment equity and alleviate labor shortages.** Employers must be prepared to hire, retain, and promote workers of color in order to eliminate workplace bias and discrimination, to adapt to an increasingly diverse workforce, and to minimize current and predicted labor shortages. While many Minneapolis employers are already taking steps to eliminate racial bias and discrimination in their employment practices, much more is needed.
- **Many small-to-midsize businesses do not have the tools and resources they need to create and implement inclusive hiring, retention, promotion and pay practices.** Many employers that want to be more inclusive have difficulty eliminating cultural barriers that create an unwelcoming environment for people of color. These barriers hinder the creation of truly diverse, equitable, and inclusive working environments and make it difficult for employers to hire and retain qualified workers of color.
- **The City could emulate a successful Boston example of prioritizing partnerships with employers to reduce employment bias and discrimination.** One model of success that the City of Minneapolis could consider replicating is the Boston Women's Workforce Council 100% Talent Compact. This initiative is the City of Boston's effort to eliminate the gender pay gap by working directly with non-profit and for-profit employers, and could be adapted to address racial disparities in the workplace. In this model, employers:
 - Commit to understanding racial bias and discrimination in employment and their underlying causes.
 - Review evidence-based interventions, conduct a self-assessment of any interventions they have already implemented, and work to improve three specific interventions tailored to their workplace.
 - Agree to participate in a review to discuss successes and challenges and to contribute anonymous data to a third party for reporting and evaluation.

Theme: Strategies to match jobs and skills usually focus on preparing individuals for the job market. Helping individuals make informed decisions about which degree programs and occupations to pursue requires better information and more opportunities to connect with employers.

- **Increasing awareness of the variety of occupations available within employment sectors can help students and job seekers focus their efforts.** Within a broad employment field such as healthcare, there are many different occupations that require different types of preparation. Even within an employment sector, some occupations have consistently higher employment and earnings. Similar differences exist between degree programs and levels of education. Providing easy access to data for students and job seekers about expected employment outcomes and expected earnings in their field can help prepare individuals to take advantage of opportunities.
- **Transparency about available jobs and employee skills is critical.** Innovative approaches could be explored to reduce the bias that occurs at various stages in the hiring process. For example, RealTime Talent recently received funding to support WorkFountain as the platform for a new kind of online labor exchange. WorkFountain is specifically built with the goal of reducing hiring bias and economic inequalities through blind-correlated matching of candidates to job opportunities.

- **Mentoring and networking opportunities are another essential strategy.** Providing and expanding mentoring and networking opportunities can help build more diverse employer and individual networks, expose individuals to new and different career options, and help individuals build the soft skills that are critical to landing and keeping a job.

Potential action steps

The following action steps identified at the roundtable could be undertaken by the City in collaboration with partners:

- The City should continue to equip and train managers within the City enterprise to identify and remove their discomfort with hiring and promoting people of color.
- The City could host another roundtable to more closely examine successful employment equity strategies and begin to create a plan for the City of Minneapolis. This roundtable could include individuals who have been impacted by employment bias and discrimination.
- The City could create a low-cost office park that would require tenants to adopt specific measures to eliminate racial bias and discrimination in their employment practices.
- The City could work to shift the way that employers hire, retain, promote and pay employees in order to eliminate racial bias and discrimination, including changing the perception employers have of people of color, shifting the requirements of job postings from experience-based to skills-based, and incentivizing employers to take steps to eliminate racial bias and discrimination in their hiring, retention, promotion, and pay.
- The City could engage and work with employers that have had discrimination complaints filed against them

Thank you once again for your participation in this roundtable discussion. Our report, should you wish to review it again or share it, is available on the Results Minneapolis website:

<http://minneapolismn.gov/coordinator/rm/Monitoring/CityGoalResultsMinneapolis/jobsandskills>. We are excited about the action steps identified at this roundtable discussion. Engaging and working with employers to eliminate bias and discrimination in employment would contribute to improvements in education and employment of African Americans and people of color in Minneapolis. We look forward to continued collaboration on this important topic and the next steps that are to come.